

349—1.10(28) Iowa empowerment funds.

1.10(1) Purpose. The purpose of Iowa empowerment funds is to:

- a. Encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children;
- b. Increase the basic skill levels of students entering school;
- c. Increase the health status of children;
- d. Reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect;
- e. Increase parents' involvement with their children; and
- f. Increase the quality and accessibility of child care and preschool.

1.10(2) Criteria for the use of early childhood funds. Use of early childhood funds is defined in department of human services 441—Chapter 169, Iowa Administrative Code.

1.10(3) Criteria for school ready funds. School ready funds may be provided according to the community plan following community assessment of assets, resources and needs and identification of priorities.

- a. Services, at a minimum in a community plan, may include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Child development services.
 - (2) Child care services.
 - (3) Child care provider training on a child's early learning experience.
 - (4) Children's health and safety.
 - (5) Assessment services to identify chemically exposed infants and children.
 - (6) Parent support and education.
 - (7) Preschool services for children at risk.
- b. Up to 3 percent, not to exceed \$60,000, of annual school ready funds may be used by the community board for administrative costs and other implementation expenses.
- c. Empowerment areas are encouraged to commit 60 percent of school ready funds to family home visitation and parent support based upon a local community needs assessment.
- d. The Iowa board will incorporate statewide quality standards and results indicators adopted by other boards and commissions into the Iowa board's funding requirements for investments in early care, education, health, and human service.
- e. Eligibility to receive school ready funds shall be limited to designated empowerment areas.
- f. School ready funds may be adjusted for other federal and state grant moneys received by the empowerment area.
- g. Distribution of school ready funds shall be in accordance with directives in the current legislative appropriation of these funds.

1.10(4) The Iowa board shall identify and apply limitations on the carryforward of school ready children grant funding. Carryforward of funds cannot exceed three years.

The Iowa board defined an unusually high percentage as 30 percent of the annual school ready allocation, based on an accrual reporting system. For fiscal years ending after July 1, 2006, empowerment areas reporting a carryover balance of school ready funds in excess of 30 percent of the previous year's allocation will receive a reduction equal to the excess amount above the 30 percent in their next year's school ready allocation, based on accrual reporting.

All local community empowerment areas receive an automatic waiver for fiscal year '06 because of the significant increased allocation and stipulations to the school ready fund for fiscal year '06. Beginning in fiscal year '07, local CEAs shall file an appeal to the Iowa board to carry forward more than 30 percent of their annual school ready allocation. The appeal would provide an opportunity for local CEAs to explain their special circumstances, the particular use designated for the carryforward funds, how this action is in alignment with their community plan, and how this plan benefits Iowa's children and families.

Any excess carryforward funds will be distributed to all local boards, through the formula, for locally identified activities that are within the guidelines for use of school ready funds.